

IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims

Claims 1-16 (Previously Canceled)

Claims 26-31 (Canceled)

17 (Currently Amended). A method for preparing modified gum arabic ~~having an improved emulsifying ability~~ which comprises a step of heating the gum arabic, which is at least one gum arabic selected from the group consisting of blocks, beads, crude pulverizates, granules and pellets having an average particle diameter of not less than 1 mm, at a temperature of not less than 60°C in an atmosphere having a relative humidity of 30-100%, ~~in the absence of an octenylsuccinic acid treatment step.~~, the method providing a modified gum arabic having an improved emulsifying ability compared with the starting unmodified gum arabic, and preventing particles of the resulting modified gum arabic from melting or adhering to other particles of the modified gum arabic and form resulting masses.

18.(Previously presented) The method according to Claim 17, wherein the gum arabic is heated in an atmosphere having a relative humidity of 70-100%.

19 (Previously presented). The method according to Claim 17, wherein the gum arabic is heated under closed-system constant-humidity conditions.

20 (Previously presented). The method according to Claim 17, wherein the temperature is 60-100°C and the relative humidity is 30-80%.

21 (Previously presented). The method according to Claim 20, wherein the relative humidity is 70-80%.

22 (Previously presented). The method according to Claim 17, wherein the temperature is 60-150°C, the relative humidity is 80-100%, and further comprising cooling it to a temperature not exceeding room temperature in an atmosphere having a relative humidity of not more than 75%.

23 (Previously presented). The method according to Claim 22, wherein the temperature is 60-

100°C.

24 (Previously presented). The method according to Claim 17, wherein the temperature is 60-150°C, and heating is effected in a closed-system atmosphere wherein the relative humidity is 80-100% and further comprising cooling it to room temperature in an open system.

25 (Previously presented). The method according to Claim 24, wherein the temperature is 60-100°C.